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Springfield. Illinois. 22nd Aug. 1852

My Dear Friend

I have several times in the course of my wanderings resolved to write a few lines to you, but my friends in England, to whom when I once begin I feel obliged to write long letters, have taken up the whole of my letter-writing time. When I left you I had some intention of going through South Carolina, & Georgia & Alabama, but the extreme heat, the weather caused me to change my purpose, & from Richmond to strike off westward over the mountains to Kentucky, Ohio &c. - Remained at Washington a week, & received great kindness from Mr. Giddings. I was present in the Senate Chamber when Mr. Sumner attempted to speak on the Fugitive Slave Bill, & though, as I anticipated, his request was refused, the debate that occurred on the question whether he should be heard was one of the deepest interest to my mind. It brought out more vividly before me, than I had ever before seen it, the deep & determined pro-slavery spirit that sometimes itself around the roots of your political organizations, & hints at its very source the current of ^{the} national feeling. ~~in this country~~

Perhaps Mr. Sumner's motion was not well-timed - perhaps he ought to have introduced the subject earlier in the session - perhaps he ought to have claimed as a right what he asked as a matter of courtesy, ~~as then~~ forced on a debate

by moving an amendment on some Bill:—on these points I
am not sufficiently informed to express an opinion; but
it certainly required as little moral courage to do what he
did, & I could not but admire his boldness, ~~in the~~ ~~though~~
though it was in the cause of God & humanity, which enabled
him to stand firm & unmoved, without a single deeply-
supported, against such a torrent of sweeping & impetuous
opposition.

Through Mr. Giddings I saw the President. W. G. did
not go with me himself, ^(I inferred the reason why) but he introduced me to a brother
member from Ohio, Judge Newton, who accompanied me
to the White House. Though not a reception day, my in-
terview with the President was of course but short, & our
main topic of conversation was the Fishery question. The
frank easy manner of Mr. Fillmore is surprising,
& it was gratifying to me to hear his emphatic statement,
that the day had long since gone by when America & England
could think of settling their disputes by war.

But you will wish to know what impressions I have re-
ceived as to the great question. I have often been told by Americans
in England that a visit to the States would very much modify my
views as to the peculiar institution, & that especially ~~and~~ if
I went South, I should see it to be a very different thing from what
at a distance I imagined it to be. And I have heard travellers
talk in such a way, about the comfort, the light heartedness,
the freedom from care, the sportive & happy life of the pri-
vileged colored race in the South, that I was partially prepared

I expect some great mental disruption, on coming so close
with slavery, ^{which grows enable} ~~enable~~ me to see at least some lines of ~~bea~~ grace
beauty where previously I could discern nothing but ugliness
& deformity. But it is not so. I have received courteous
attention from slave owners, though I have not concealed from
them my views as to Slavery, & I have been compelled to
admire some traits in the character ^{many} ~~there~~, I have met
with - but ^{respecting this} I cannot to America with feelings of loathing
& abhorrence for an Institution which insults God & de-
grades ~~man~~ humanity, by ~~making~~ treating men ~~men~~
as human cattle; those feelings have been deepened ten-
fold by what I have ^{seen} ~~seen~~ ^{I stand upon this ground; and} ~~seen~~ ^{They are} ~~seen~~ ^{so} ~~seen~~ ^{deeply} ~~seen~~ ^{into}
my soul that nothing can now eradicate them. I might in-
deed speak of having seen on parts of slaves burys their
faces in the earth & greatly enjoying the feast - & another,
regaling themselves with peaches - & I might say that I have
seen some of the men with good coats on their backs, &
some of the women attired even in silks - I have seen them
caught a dance, & heard them sing; but what has all this
to do with the terrible & spiritual enormity of the system?
Nothing whatever but to add ^{a deeper} ~~another~~ ^{thing} ~~but~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{darkness}
darkness. I saw men, women & children sold in Richmond;
I saw families scattered - husbands & wives, mother &
daughter, sister & brother divided; - I saw the shameless
indecent exposures of the persons of men & women ~~scold~~
behind a screen, before the auction commenced, the par-
ticulars of which I dare not write even to you; - I saw

intrans to the foul & abominable results offered to some
of their defenceless women by the "chivalrous!! men" - ra-
ther the fiendish monsters - who conducted them proceeding;
- I heard their kind remarks; - I received the entreaties
of a mother & her daughter - the latter about 19, of great personal
attractions & quite as white as Ellen Craft - as I was looking down,
to buy them together, & afterwards saw the mother sold to
a person from Alabama, whilst the daughter was bought by
a man near Richmond; I saw a woman suffering from illness,
& scarcely able to support herself with a staff, sold for 15 dollars,
by order of the commissioners of the Circuit of Maryland, to pay the
^(I have in my possession a copy of the official announcement of this sale)
debts of her owner; I saw an old man on the block, clasping
his hands in agony when he ~~saw~~^{observed} a stranger bid for him, &
I heard him, with feeling that I can never forget, exclaim "I'll
be of no use - I'll be whipped - I'll die if you take me from my wife &
family in Richmond"; I saw the marks of the lash on the backs of men,
women & children in the examinations about referred to; ^{and} as
as I gazed on these fearful scenes - scenes that made me
pale & ask was I indeed on earth & among men, or was
I surrounded by fiends - I felt what no words can express -
my heart was hot within me, & it was with the utmost
difficulty that I could repress the fiery indignation that
burned & glowed within my soul. Some vent I felt that
I must give to my feelings, & I went to the Baptist Book
Depository, where I saw ~~two~~ two persons, one of them apparently
a minister, to whom I mentioned the fact that I was a
minister from England - the scene I had just witnessed

& the sickening feeling, & horror that it had called forth within me; & I begged them to tell me how the Church regarded this subject, & in what way she justified herself & vindicated her silence as to such things. ~~as there I had intended~~. One of them very coolly said, "Sir, you will be less moved by these things, when you have been a little longer here?" "God forbid!" I responded, "that I ever become indifferent to such atrocities." "Well, Sir," he added, "if the Church were to speak as you would have it speak, it would be driven from the South, & there would be no Church here." "Perhaps so," I replied, "but would it not be better to leave the Devil to do his own work, than to stand by his side & encourage him to your silence?" After some few more conversations, in which I had assured to answer their questions as to what I would have them do, they recommended me to read the letters of Fuller and controversy with Dr. Mayland of Brown University, a copy of which I purchased at the store.

I have had much conversation with several persons on the subject, & today I have parted with a Cotton Planter from Arkansas, into whose company I have been more a good deal thrown for the last two days, & with whom I have very fully discussed the matter. He pressed me to come & visit him, & see over his plantation. This admission was, however, very extraordinary, though to his own mind this his favorite argument, that his slaves were happy, seemed to

Francis Bishop.

justify all that he admitted.

I am going to visit a number of emigrant families in this neighborhood, & some in the northern part of Illinois, near Chicago; then I shall make my way as quick as possible to Niagara, & thence to New York & Boston, at which latter place I hope to be by the second week in September.

If W. May of Syracuse is at home I shall certainly try to see him; & I hope also to have the pleasure of seeing W. May of Leicester before I leave this country, which I feel that I must do early in October. I long to see my dear little motherless children, & my night dreams won't rise up against any prolonging an absence from them, which is sure to be painful, notwithstanding all its objects of compensating interest.

You can make any use of this letter you please, except print it. It is written far too hurriedly for that. Besides which, I have got notes of each individual sale at the four auctions I attended, ~~specify~~ & I certainly shall make use of them in some form or other, that the revelation I thus obtained may not be confined to myself.

With my kind regards to Mr. Garrison I remain
My Dear Friend

Yours truly & affectionately
Francis Bishop.
Mr. Wm. Lloyd Garrison Esq.